



HOUSE VOTES ON DEAL TO END SHUTDOWN

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The Pueblo Chieftain

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Soup kitchen faces high need, rises to challenge



Seriah Apelian ladles mixed vegetables onto a plate on Nov. 10 at the Pueblo Community Soup Kitchen.

JUSTIN REUTTER/ THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN

‘We are well prepared, we can keep feeding people and feeding them well’

Justin Reutter
Pueblo Chieftain
USA TODAY NETWORK

The Pueblo Community Soup Kitchen has experienced a significant increase in clients due to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) crisis, according to Kathy Cline, soup kitchen director. However, they have been equipped to handle the need. SNAP benefits, also known as food stamps, were not issued on Nov. 1 due to a record-breaking 41-day government shutdown. While a deal to end the shutdown has seemingly been reached with a 60-40

vote to advance legislation late on Nov. 9, it is still unclear when SNAP benefits for the majority of Pueblo County recipients will be disbursed, according to Anthony Mestas, a spokesperson for Pueblo County government. Approximately 32,000 Colorado SNAP beneficiaries received full benefits after a federal district court ruled on Nov. 7 that President Donald Trump’s administration is obligated to fully fund SNAP to states. However, hours later, the U.S. Supreme Court blocked the lower court’s order requiring full payment, leaving 560,000 Coloradans who have yet to receive payment waiting for answers.

Kline told the *Chieftain* on Nov. 10 that visitors to the local soup kitchen have increased by a large margin over the last three months, with a significant spike in November. On Sept. 8, 163 Puebloans showed up for a hot lunch, served daily between 10:30 a.m. and noon. On Oct. 8, that number rose to 207, and on Nov. 8, 256. On Saturdays, the soup kitchen serves three lunches -- a hot lunch, a bagged lunch, and a “third they pick and choose,” but Kline said she only counted for the hot lunch itself. “If I multiplied it, that was 768 meals going out of here, just for lunch,” she said. The soup kitchen also started serving an evening meal on Nov. 4, Kline

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Council OKs agreement for Bessemer Circle K and housing

James Bartolo
Pueblo Chieftain
USA TODAY NETWORK

An agreement set to yield a Circle K retail store and additional housing for the Bessemer neighborhood was narrowly approved by Pueblo City Council on Nov. 10. The development will take place in the 1200 block of East Orman Avenue. Circle K plans to demolish the vacant Convergys building on the site to make way for the retail store’s construction. The city of Pueblo intends to make a \$600,000 investment to develop a parcel on the north end of the site and suit it for qualifying residential development. The agreement was approved with a 4-3 vote by council. Roger Gomez, a resident of the Bessemer neighborhood, was one of the three councilors to vote against the agreement. He told fellow council members that he understood the need for housing but expressed concerns about safety in the area. “I invite everybody on this council to come by my house,” he said. “I’ll make the iced tea. Sit on my corner, on my porch, and watch what goes on in that community there. First off, on Northern (Avenue) right there, it’s like the Indianapolis Speedway. Why do we not want to protect people? I don’t get this. It’s not great for me to have to say, ‘I’m going to vote no’ on something

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A sign outside Circle K gas station on 601 W. U.S. Highway 50.

JAMES BARTOLO/THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN

How Pueblo businesses have been impacted by the government shutdown

Justin Reutter
Pueblo Chieftain
USA TODAY NETWORK

While a deal to end the 41-day federal government shutdown has seemingly been reached by the United States Senate and was expected to be approved by the House of Representatives on Nov. 12, local businesses have seen ripple effects from the shutoff of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, according to the United Way of Pueblo County. In Pueblo County alone, residents receive approximately \$8 million in SNAP benefits a month. Approximately 24%

of Puebloans receive food stamps every month, according to the Pueblo County Department of Human Services. Currently, approximately 560,000 Coloradans are still without food stamps, Gov. Jared Polis said on Nov. 7. As of Nov. 12, it was still unknown when food stamps might be released and in what amount. While grocery stores and restaurants were most impacted, the entire business community saw a ripple effect, according to Duane Nava, president of the Greater Pueblo Chamber of Commerce. “I think the impact the government

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Super Market Gonzalez owner Evans Gonzalez rings up a customer outside the market on May 10.

ZACHARY ALLEN/THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN

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